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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/976,537	10/12/2001	Charles R. Fuller	PGI6044P0640US	1519

7590 03/12/2003

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EXAMINER

RUDDOCK, ULA CORINNA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1771

DATE MAILED: 03/12/2003

8

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

keep in case

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/976,537	FULLER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Ula C Ruddock	1771	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10/12/01.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 8-10 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-7 and 11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>4</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-7 and 11, drawn to a nonwoven fabric, classified in class 442, subclass 408.
 - II. Claims 8-10, drawn to a method for making a nonwoven fabric, classified in class 28, subclass 104.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions II and I are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case, the product as claimed can be made by another method, i.e. by hydroentangling the fabric to create a lightly entangled outer surface region and a highly entangled inner core region.

3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

4. During a telephone conversation with Stephen Geimer on March 4, 2003, a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-7 and 11.

Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 8-10

are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Information Disclosure Statement

6. The information disclosure statement filed January 23, 2002, has been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 1-7 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Everhart et al. (US 5,801,107).

Everhart et al. disclose a liquid transport material that is hydraulically needled into a nonwoven fibrous structure (abstract). The synthetic fibers used may be polyester, polyamides, and polyolefins; natural fibers include cotton (col 8, ln 3-8). The nonwoven fibrous web may be hydraulically entangled at 0.001 to 0.03 hp-hr/lb (col 8, ln 32-35). With regard to claim 6, it should be noted that the method of forming the article is not germane to the issue of patentability of the article itself. Therefore, this limitation has not been given patentable weight. With regard to claim 7, chemical post-treatments may be added to the web (col 9, ln 54-67). With regard to claim 11, it has been held that a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed product is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed product from a prior art product satisfying the claimed structural limitations. *Ex parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (1987). As a result, the phrase "a cast padding material" has not been given any patentable weight. Therefore, because Everhart's article is a hydraulically needled nonwoven fibrous structure made of the same fiber materials as Applicant's invention, the claim limitations have been met.

Although Everhart et al. do not explicitly teach the claimed highly entangled outer surface region and lightly entangled inner core region, it is reasonable to presume that this varying degree of entanglement is inherent to Everhart's invention. Support for said presumption is found in the use of like materials (i.e. an entangled nonwoven fabric made of the same fibers) and the use like processes (i.e. hydraulically entangling at the same energy, 0.001 to 0.03 hp-hr/lb). The burden is upon Applicant to prove otherwise. *In re Fitzgerald*, 205 USPQ 594. In addition, the presently claimed property of a highly entangled outer surface region and lightly entangled inner core region would obvious have been present once the Everhart et al. product is provided. Note *In re Best*,

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195 USPQ at 433, footnote 4 (CCPA 1977) as to the providing of this rejection made above under 35 USC 102.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: Suzuki et al. (US 4,377,615) is pertinent because it discloses a nonwoven fabric having differing fiber densities, but fails to disclose that the fabric is hydroentangled.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ula C Ruddock whose telephone number is 703-305-0066. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on 703-308-2414. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

UCR

March 7, 2003

Ula Ruddock